

REMARKS

The claims are rejected in view of U.S. Patent 6,005,939 (FORTENBERRY). The independent claims are amended to more fully distinguish over FORTENBERRY.

Independent claim 1 is amended to recite an authentication apparatus (e.g., interconnecting device 40 of Figure 1) which is positioned *between* a first interconnecting device (e.g., interconnecting device 10a of Figure 1) and a second communication device (e.g., web server 60 or mail server 62 of Figure 1). Claim 1 further recites an external recording device that stores authentication information. The external recording device is connected to the first interconnecting device. The first interconnecting device includes a transmit unit to transmit the authentication information to the authentication apparatus.

FORTENBERRY fails to show or suggest such a configuration. In particular, FORTENBERRY fails to show or suggest an authenticating apparatus that is positioned between a first interconnecting device and a second communication device, wherein the first interconnecting device transmits authentication information from an external recording device to the authentication apparatus. Thus, claim 1 should be in a condition for allowance. Claims 2-3 are dependent upon claim 1 and therefore should also be in a condition for allowance. New claim 16 is also dependent upon claim 1 and therefore should also be in a condition for allowance. Claim 16 recites the feature that the first interconnecting device prevents the first communication device from directly transmitting authentication information to the second interconnecting device.

Independent claim 4 is amended to recite that the interconnecting device is located between the first communication device and the authentication apparatus. The claim further recites that the interconnecting device has an acquiring unit to acquire authentication information from a recording device and a transmit unit to transmit the authentication information to the authentication apparatus. Thus, claim 4 has limitations of the type described in connection with claim 1 and therefore should also be in a condition for allowance. Claims 5-12 are dependent upon claim 4 and therefore should also be in a condition for allowance. New claims 17 and 18 are also dependent upon claim 4 and therefore should also be in a condition for allowance.

Independent claim 13 recites a program in a computer-readable medium that has limitations of the type discussed in connection with claim 4. Therefore, claim 13 and its dependent claims 14-15 should also be in a condition for allowance.

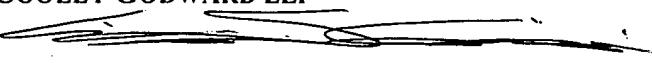
In sum, all pending claims should now be in a condition for allowance. If there are any residual issues that need to be resolved prior to allowing the application, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned.

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